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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 001684

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [UK](#) [AS](#) [JA](#)  
SUBJECT: JAPAN MULLING IRAQ FORCE ADJUSTMENT ISSUES

REF: A. STATE 46975  
[1](#)B. TOKYO 1627

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Joe Donovan. Reason: 1.4 (b)(d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: MOFA National Security Policy Division Director Shimmi indicated to Poloffs March 28 that he was personally optimistic about extending Air Self Defense Force C-130 flights at least to Baghdad Airport once assessment of the nine "candidate" airfields is complete. Shimmi was less optimistic that Japan would send a PRT to Basrah, where, as a member of the recent assessment team, he had found the security situation worse than he had expected. Japan hopes to decide certain troop-adjustment issues before the scheduled rotation out of its troops in late April, Shimmi stated. Consequently, the next month of coordination would be crucial in achieving an outcome that benefits all parties. At the same time, he acknowledged that the Prime Minister's office has made clear that the Self-Defense Forces humanitarian mission must withdraw from Samawah. In a separate meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, Assistant Cabinet Secretary Ando's Executive Assistant told Poloffs he would relay Ref A points to Ando. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Following presentation of the information contained Ref A regarding U.S. priorities for Japan in Iraq after its troop adjustment, MOFA National Security Policy Division Director Jun Shimmi on March 28 explained to Poloffs that he had just returned from Iraq. He had visited Basrah on March 25 as part of a six-person assessment team sent to evaluate its suitability as a possible Japanese Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) site. Describing his initial impression of Basrah as "much worse than I had thought," Shimmi told Poloff that while his government would make the final decision after an internal review, he was not optimistic that Basrah would be selected as a PRT site. Asked whether Japan would consider places other than Basrah, Shimmi said Japan was not "stuck" on any one place. Basrah, nonetheless, was attractive because it was in the same region as Samawah, the location of current Japan Self-Defense Force operations, and is a major port city. Following a brief discussion of PRTs in general, Shimmi indicated that Japan would still appreciate more specific concrete suggestions on possible PRT roles for Japan.

[1](#)3. (C) Turning to possible expansion of Air Self Defense Forces (ASDF) airlift destinations, Shimmi explained that an ASDF assessment team was currently evaluating the security situation at Baghdad, Balad and seven additional airfields. The process would take more time to complete, he remarked, because U.S. forces, who are taking the assessment team to the various sites, have been pulled away by sudden operational requirements. Nonetheless, Shimmi said he was cautiously optimistic that once the process is complete, C-130 flights would be extended to Baghdad Airport, at a minimum. To date, ASDF had been reluctant to consider new

operations, citing security concerns. Shimmi believed that the ASDF would see that the security concerns at Baghdad Airport were not as grave as they had imagined, noting that many commercial aircraft are now flying into that airport. Separately, Shimmi noted that Japan was announcing that same day, March 28, that it would resume yen loans for Iraqi reconstruction (Ref B), a matter handled by a separate MOFA division.

#### Japan's Decision Timeline

14. (C) Commenting on the Australian government's offer to keep forces in Samawah as long as necessary, Shimmi observed that the job of the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) there is done. The Japanese government will announce plans for next steps at "the end of April," when the current ninth contingent of GSDF troops is scheduled to rotate out of Samawah. Shimmi outlined Japan's general timeline with regard to the GSDF:

- March 28: "Mini-Quad" in London
- April 4-9: Shimmi travels to London and then Washington to discuss "parameters" of Japanese participation post-troop adjustment
- April 10: Director General-level Full Quad in London
- mid-April: Japan's decision on next steps for GSDF
- April 10-23: Consult domestically and with coalition partners

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- April 24 (week of): Announce next steps

These dates are tentative, Shimmi explained, with all presuming that the March 28 "mini-Quad" meeting results in an April 10 Full Quad meeting.

15. (C) Whatever the outcome, Shimmi concluded, "everyone must be winners." At the same time, he acknowledged that the Prime Minister's Office has made clear that the SDF must withdraw from Samawah. Consequently, the next month of coordination would be crucial in achieving an outcome that benefits all parties. Shimmi underscored that his government is considering all three priorities suggested by the United States -- airlift expansion, reconstruction aid and PRT participation -- but was quick to add that Japan "politically could not manage all three at once."

16. (C) In a separate March 27 meeting, Poloffs conveyed Ref A points to Hideki Adachi, Executive Assistant to Assistant Cabinet Secretary Hiroyasu Ando. Adachi told Poloffs that he would relay the information on U.S. Government priorities for Japanese support of Iraq to the appropriate persons, including Assistant Cabinet Secretary Ando. When offered further detailed information on Provincial Reconstruction Teams, Adachi responded that people other than himself would be more appropriate interlocutors and promised to contact Poloff if those parties wished further information.

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